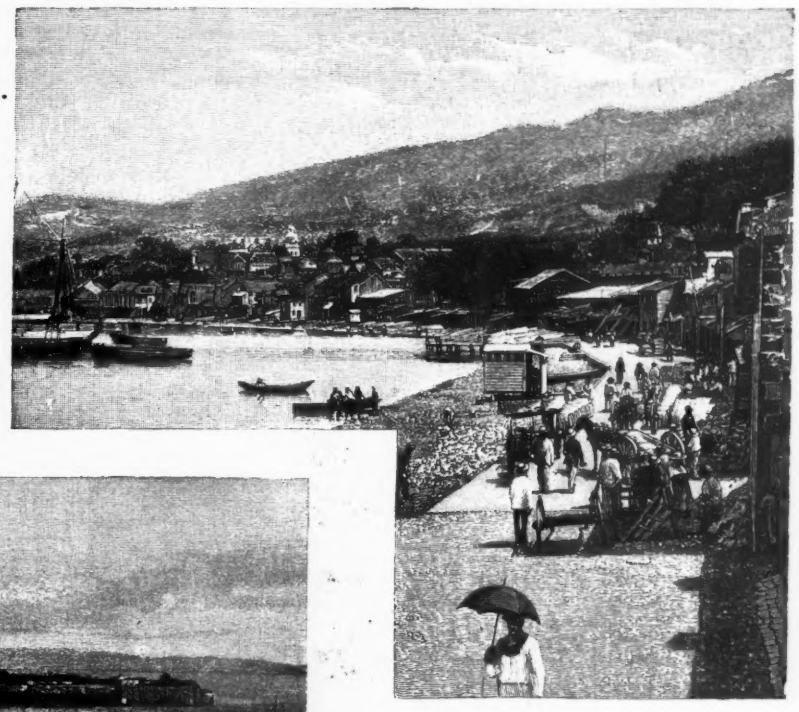
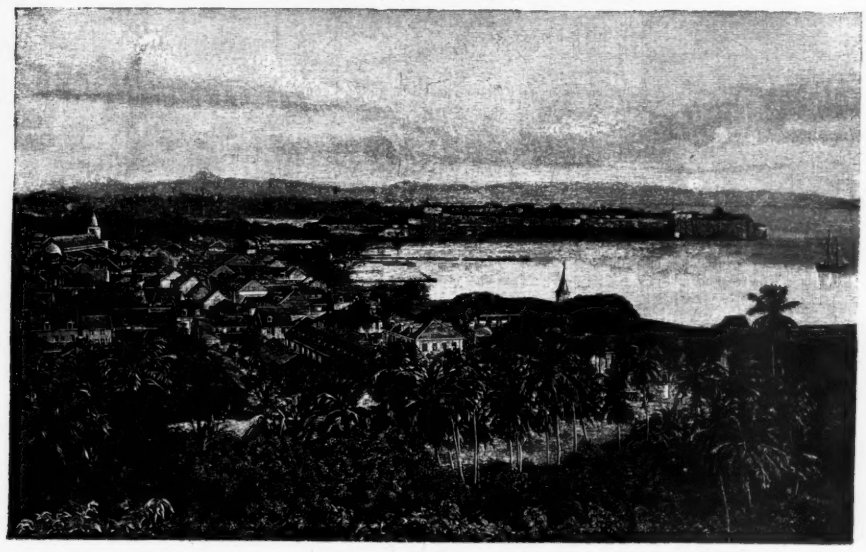
The Volcanic Disaster at Martinique

THE ERUPTION OF MOUNT PELEE

So far as can be learned, until vessels on their way to rescue any survivors return, the volcano of Pelee burst into eruptions on the morning of May 8, and in an incredibly short space of time discharged enormous quantities of ashes, mud, and fire, and buried the city of St. Pierre. One vessel, the British steamer "Roddam," got away, but nearly all the officers and men were either injured or killed. The submarine disturbances broke all cables, destroyed all shipping within several miles of the shore before there was time for vessels to get under way. For more than a hundred miles away from St. Pierre ashes and cinders fell into the sea and upon passing vessels. In seems that a portion of the island of Martinique and some forty thousand human beings were obliterated in a few minutes. The horrible tragedy exceeds anything of the kind that has happened since the days of Pompeii. The fact that Mount Pelee has not been in eruption for fifty years seems to have induced the inhabitants of St. Pierre to believe that it was extinct.



Along the Quays—Mount Pelee in the Background

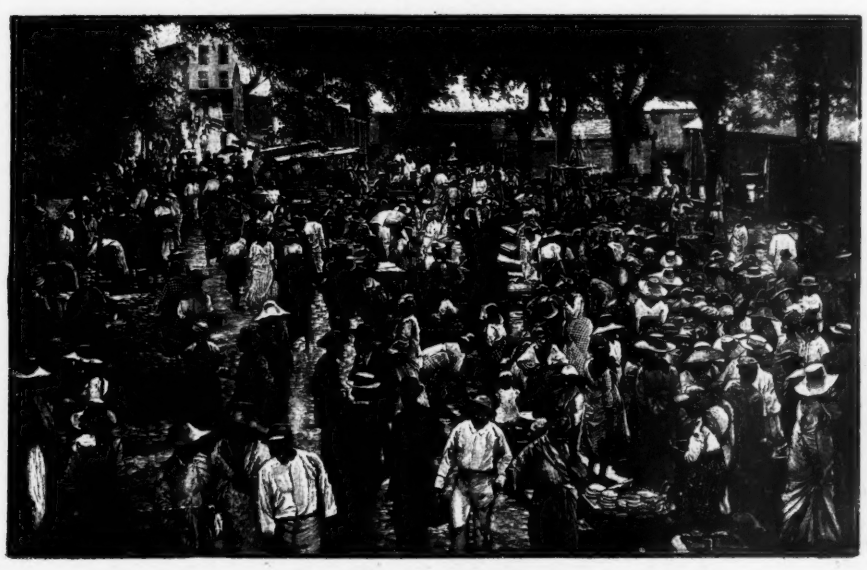


Fort-de-France, Martinique

SIMILAR HISTORIC DISASTERS

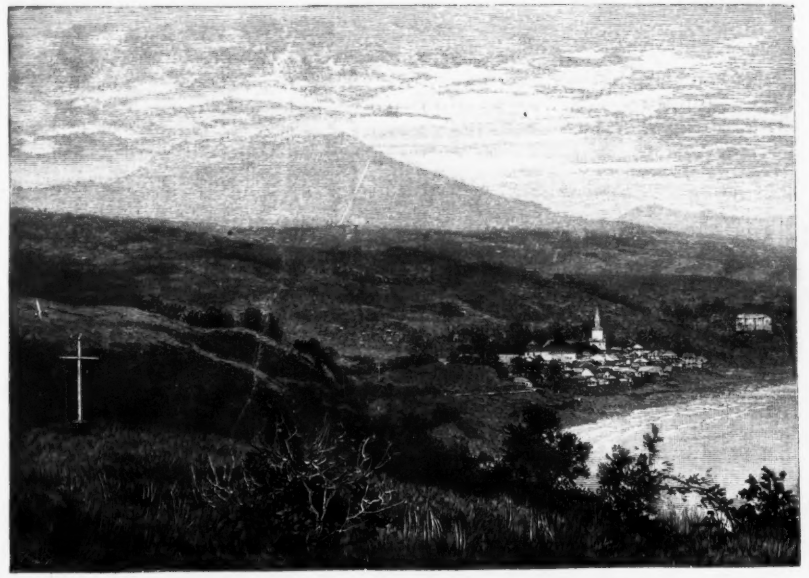
Pompeii destroyed by Mt. Vesuvius, 79.
Constantinople earthquake, 557.
Syrian earthquake, 15,000 killed, 1158.
Cilician earthquake, 20,000 killed, 1268.
Earthquake in Canton, China, 150,000 killed, 1731.
Lisbon destroyed by earthquake, 30,000 killed, 1755.
Earthquake in Calabria, 10,000 killed, 1857.
Krakatoa and Ischia destroyed, 40,000 killed, 1883.
Hawaiian eruption, 1880.
Venezuelan earthquake, 3,000 killed, 1894.
Galveston, Texas, tidal wave, 6000 killed, 1900.
Guatemalan earthquake, 1902.

One of St. Pierre's picturesque Streets



The old Market-place, St. Pierre

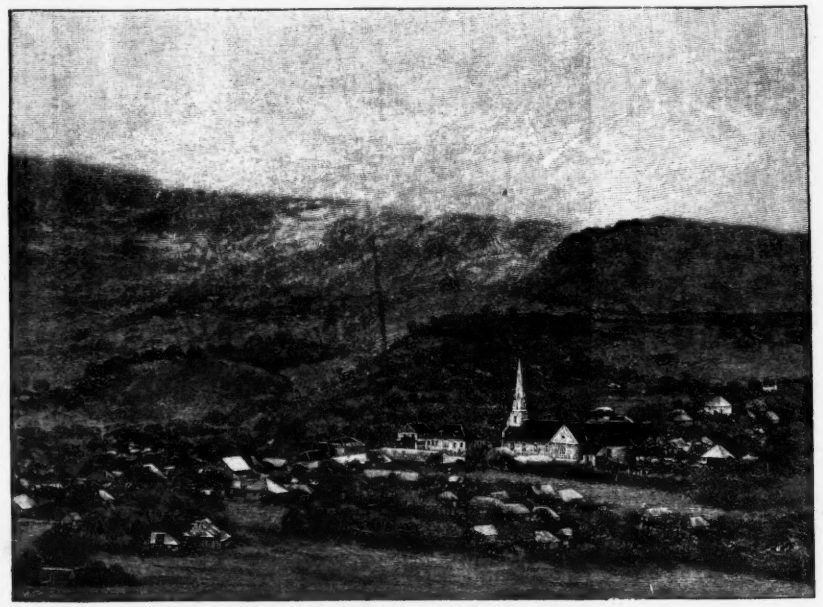
Statue of the Empress Josephine, who was Born on the Island



Mount Pelee, from the Village of Grand Anne

Rue Victor Hugo, one of the principal Business Streets of the City

Quarter of the Fort, overlooking the Riviere Roxelane



Morne Rouge, the Residential Section of St. Pierre, which was among the Places reported destroyed

HISTORY OF THE DISASTER

The island of Martinique is one of the Caribbees circling the Caribbean Sea, about 450 miles from Porto Rico, and belongs to France.

The population of Martinique is 175,000.

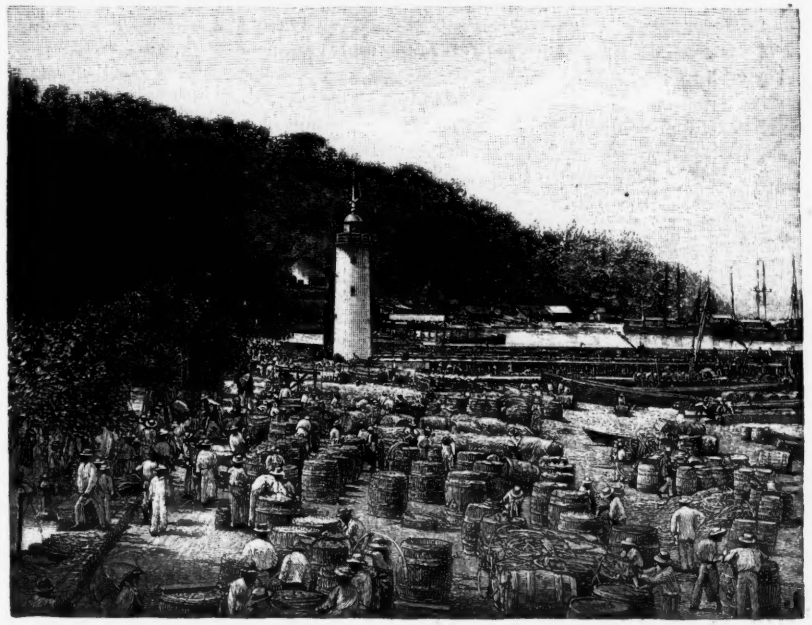
St. Pierre is the principal city, with a population of 25,000.

The volcano Mount Pelee began its eruptions on May 3.

On May 8 explosions of mud, steam, and ashes took place, which in a few minutes set St. Pierre on fire and buried the city.

At the same time submarine disturbances took place, wrecking the shipping in St. Pierre Harbor, including eighteen large vessels.

According to messages received at the moment of going to press, the inhabitants of St. Pierre (25,000 souls), with the exception of about thirty people, were killed, including L. Mouttet, the French Governor, United States Consul Prentis, and his assistant Mr. Testart.



Commercial St. Pierre—The Sugar landing, the Wharves and Shipping in the Background

MOUNT PELEE AND ST. PIERRE, MARTINIQUE